OBSERVATIONS
UPON
CATO,
A
TRAGEDY.
By Mr. *ADDISON.*

In a Letter to * * *

——— CUNCTA *Terrarum Subacta,*
Præter atrocem Animum CATONIS.

Hor.

LONDON:
Printed for A. BALDWIN in *Warwick-Lane.* M. DCC. XIII.
Price Six Pence.

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SIR, *London*, April 25, 1713.

I Here send you the Tragedy of *CATO*, which had rais'd the Expectation of the Town to a great Height, and now has justly satisfy'd it, to the Play I will leave you for Conviction; but since you desir'd some Observations from me, which you were pleas'd to think would make the Reading more agreeable and useful to you, I shall give you some with the same Freedom you requested them.

In the first place I shall present to you a general Idea of the main Character of *CATO*, that you may the better observe with what Justness and Propriety his Character with all his Sentiments is preserv'd to the last.

The next Head that I propose is, to point out to you how justly all the other Characters are distinguish'd from each other, and made subservient to the Conduct of the whole.

And for a Conclusion, I will endeavour to hint at some extraordinary Beauties, and show how exactly they are conformable, not only to the true Spirit of Poetry, but the best Rules of Criticism.

In order to form a general Idea of *CATO*, you must have a View of the Scene of Affairs in which he acted, an Age full of Vice and Corruption, debauch'd from their old ge-

nerous *Roman Principles*, abounding with Plots and Conſpiracies againſt the preſent Model of their Government, divided into Parties, headed by violent and ambitious Spirits, and carried on with all the Arts of Deſign, Hypocriſy, and Diſſimulation; and in ſhort, ſuch an Age wherein as CICERO deſcribes it, it was as dangerous for a good Man to hazard himſelf in Buſineſs, and act in publick Offices, as it was diſgraceful and mean to retire from them. In this Age the great *CATO* appear'd, acting meerly upon the Principles of Honour and Juſtice, neither aw'd nor ſeduc'd by Parties, with the trueſt Notions for the ancient Republic Form, and a hearty Zeal for it, publickly oppoſing both its diſguis'd and open Enemies. When the *Civil War* broke out he ſided indeed with POMPEY, as moſt of the Senators and Lovers of their Country did, not thinking him ſo dangerous an Enemy as CÆSAR; and *CATO* particularly hoping by the Influence he had over him to bring him to reſettle the State upon its old Bottom, if he happen'd to prove the Conqueror. Upon theſe Motives he engag'd in the *Civil War*, the Event of which you very well know, ſo that I ſhall paſs that over, and come to the *Scene* of the Play, when he and the Remnant of his Followers were inclos'd by CÆSAR in *Utica*.

But I know you will not forgive me, unleſs I touch upon *CATO*'s Character, as drawn by Poets as well as Hiſtorians; and therefore I ſhall give you both his publick and private one out of LUCAN, who in this Deſcription had as ſtrict a Regard to Truth as any Hiſtorian, his private Life, the Simplicity of his Manners, and Habit, his Notions of Philoſophy, and his Manner of Behaviour, are excellently painted in the ſecond Book which I ſhall venture to tranſlate.

———*Hi mores, hæc duri immota Catonis*
Secta fuit.———

These *CATO*'s Morals were, and this the kind,
Of His rough *Sect*, and His severer Mind,
A due proportion'd Medium to attend,
And think while living to respect his End;
To follow Nature, and observe her Laws,
To pour His Life out in his Country's Cause;
From mean Idea's to enlarge His Mind,
Nor think his Actions to himself confin'd,
Nor *CATO* born for One, but *All Mankind.*
He eat for Hunger, not to please the Sense,
A happy *Epicure* in Abstinence,
His House to keep out Cold alone did seem,
Convenience was *Magnificence* to Him;
Upon his Back a Hairy Gown he bore,
Such as His *Sabine* great Forefathers wore;
Such as the Face of Antique Garbs express,
This was his *Pomp* and *Gaiety* of Dress;

He ſought the Pleaſure of a chaſt Embrace,
For One great End, to propagate his Race:
Severely honeſt, juſt without Allay,
Studious, the Common Good alone to weigh.
At once diſcreet, and fond in ev'ry view,
His Country's *Husband*, and Her *Father* too.

His Zeal and Heartineſs for the State, and the Anxiety of his Spirit for the Calamities that were likely to befal it, His generous Concern for his Fellow Sufferers, and his Neglect of himſelf, are farther diſplay'd, when BRUTUS is deſcrib'd coming to him in the Dead of Night, to ask his Opinion of the Condition of Affairs, in order to follow his Reſolution.

Him BRUTUS found with wakeful Care oppreſt,
The Public Good revolving in his Breaſt:
Big with the Fate and Deſtiny of *Rome*,
Her Children's Fortune, and His Country's Doom;
Fearful what each might Act, and each Endure,
But unconcern'd, and for *Himſelf* ſecure.

And ſince I have gone thus far in ſhewing his Character, as drawn by this Poet, I will attempt to tranſlate that Part of

of his Speech to BRUTUS, wherein He offers himſelf a voluntary Sacrifice for his Country, only wiſhing that it may in ſome Manner repreſent the Beauties of the excellent Original.

O! would the Gods above, and thoſe below,
In Mercy harken to their *CATO*'s Vow,
And on This willingly devoted Head
All their collected Stores of Vengeance ſhed!
For *Rome* of old her *Decii* could fall,
In one Illuſtrious Ruin ſaving all:
That thus I might this ſingle Life expoſe,
To ſtop her Plagues, and expiate her Woes!
O! againſt Me may both their Hoſts engage;
Set up the happy Mark of Public Rage:
Hither fly every Dart, launch ev'ry Spear,
And ev'ry vile *Barbarian* Arm ſtrike *Here*.
I would ſuſtain each Individual's Share;
Be pierc'd, be gor'd, by ev'ry Murd'rer there,
And all their Wounds in *bleeding Tranſport* bear.
Could but this Blood, for her Preſervance ſpilt,
Redeem the Nation; and attone her Guilt:

Could

Could this one Sacrifice prevent Her Doom,
And quit the Score between her Gods and *Rome*.

And now, Sir, you will eaſily perceive how agreeable to this the Character of *CATO* is ſuſtained through the whole Play; how exactly he Acts and Talks as *CATO* ſhould; the dear Impreſſion and Image of his Country always riſing up in his Thoughts, and being expreſt in ſuch a Manner as is anſwerable to the Idea of that Great Man. How eaſy the Private Concerns of Life ſit upon him! and how full he is of *Rome!* In the *Second* ACT, you find him beſieg'd and encompaſs'd by CÆSAR at *Utica*, in Conference with a few Senators who had ſtuck to the Cauſe of *Liberty*, in this utmoſt Exigence, not dropping a Word unbecoming his *Roman* Spirit, regulating their Debates, and returning an Anſwer to CÆSAR with an Air ſuperiour to his Fortune. And tho' in this Debate *CATO* utters many *Sentences* which would not be graceful for another to ſpeak, yet according to QUINTILIAN's Rule, they are very proper and juſt in him: for, ſays the Orator, *Sentences are moſt properly put in the Mouth of Men of Authority, that the Perſon may give a Confirmation to the Weight and Importance of the Subject.* Conſider, Sir, then what an Idea they muſt needs have of *CATO* before, and you will plainly perceive what an Influence his Reſolution, deliver'd in that ſolemn Manner, muſt naturally have over them.

A ſecond Inſtance of the Greatneſs and Intrepidity of his Soul, you will obſerve in the *Third* ACT, where he ventures himſelf unarmed amidſt a Band of Conſpirators, who, by the ſingle Awe of his Virtue, are ſo abaſh'd, that they dar'd not to execute their Purpoſe when it was moſt in their Power, which puts me in mind of a Paſſage in VIRGIL that

ſeems

ſeems to bear a near Alluſion to this Action. The Poet is there deſcribing the ſudden Fall of the Waves, and the Ceaſing of the Winds, at the Appearance of NEPTUNE, and makes a Similitude drawn from a popular Tumult compos'd at once by the Sight and Words of a grave and good Man: take it in Mr. DRYDEN's Tranſlation.

As when in Tumults riſe th'ignoble Crowd,
Mad are their Motions, and their Tongues are loud,
And Stones and Brands in ratling Vollies fly,
And all the ruſtic Arms that Fury can ſupply:
If then ſome grave and pious Man appear,
They huſh their Noiſe, and lend a liſt'ning Ear;
He ſooths with ſober Words their angry Mood,
And quenches their innate Deſire of Blood.

By this it appears that there is nothing unnatural attributed to the Power and Influence of *CATO*'s Virtue in this Inſtance. After he has delivered the Mutineers up to Juſtice, he wiſely takes an Opportunity from thence to recommend their Darling *Liberty* to his Friends, and goes off as calm and ſedate as if no ſuch thing had happened.

In the *Fourth* ACT you will ſee a greater Trial of his Conſtancy, where when the Relation of his Son MARCUS's Death is brought to Him by his Brother PORTIUS, before the Narration is finiſhed, he thinks not of the Loſs of his Son, but only of his Behaviour; and when he finds That

Glorious, crys out—— *I am ſatisfied!*—— One of the Nobleſt Inſtances of *Roman* Fortitude and Patience, and not unlike that in CORNEILLE's *Tragedy* of HORACE; which becauſe perhaps you have not read it, I will give you the Paſſage as I find it quoted by *Monſieur* BOILEAU in his Preface to LONGINUS. *A Woman who had been preſent at the Combat of the Three* Horatii *with the Three* Curiatii, *but went away from the Place too ſoon, and had not ſeen the End of it, came over haſtily to old* HORACE, *their Father, and told him, Two of his Sons were killed, and that the Third, finding he was not able to make any Reſiſtance, fled away; upon which, the old* Roman, *full of Love to his Country, without Mourning for the Loſs of his Two Sons, who had died ſo Glorioufly, grieves only for the ſhameful Flight of the laſt, who, ſays he, by ſo baſe an Action has fix'd an eternal Stain on the Name of* HORACE: *And their Siſter, who was preſent, ſaying to him,* What would you have had him done againſt Three? *he replies briskly,* ——DIE.

But now look at this Great Man under another View; his Friendſhip, Generous Concern, and Tenderneſs for the *Numidian* Prince JUBA, whoſe Father, by following the Fortunes of an unſucceſsful Cauſe, had ruin'd Himſelf, and involv'd his Son in the ſame Condition. *CATO*, in return, to make Amends for his Misfortunes, is in one Place ſeaſoning his Soul with Virtuous Principles, and forming him to true Greatneſs; in another, compaſſionating his Loſs, both of his Father and Empire, with the greateſt Tenderneſs; and at laſt, with a ſort of Prophecy, raiſing his Hopes on future Proſpects of a Dignity that would be the Reward of his Virtues, not of his Birth.

After this, we come to view him under the Light of his *Philoſophy*, which he makes uſe of to form his Reſolutions upon, how beſt to diſengage himſelf, from the World and CÆSAR. PLATO's *Book* on the *Immortality of the Soul* lying before

before him, and his Sword, the designed Instrument of his Relief, He settles his Resolution for Death, and argues from the Philosopher, upon the Certainty of a *Future State*. I should wrong the Strength and Beauty of the Argument, by putting it in any Words different from those of the Poet, therefore I will leave it wholly to your Reading and Admiration. Observe only the great Variety in that excellent SPEECH; his Resolution, his Comfort from the Helps of Philosophy, the Prospect of Eternity, the Uncertainty of the *Where* and *When!* Observe how his Soul seems to stumble, and be shockt at that; and upon a View of the *Book* and *Sword*, resumes its Resolution, and shaking off the Natural Abhorrence of Death, takes a noble Flight into *Immortality*. Again, how the Infirmities of Nature begin to overcome him, and make him defer the Execution to a fitter Time. TULLY, upon this Book of PLATO's, has an excellent Passage, which seems to warrant the Uncertainty of *CATO*'s Conduct in this Place; as well as I can remember, it is to this Purpose; "While I am reading *(says he)* PLATO's "Book, I am allur'd and charm'd into a Conviction of the "*Immortality of the Soul*, and its *Existence* in a *Future State*; "but as soon as I have laid down the Book I relapse into "Uncertainty, and all my former Conviction slides away "from me.

But to return to the Play: *CATO*, after a sound Sleep, (the Blessing of a good and composed Mind) executes his Purpose, and is brought in Wounded, before his Son, Daughter, and Friends; and even in the Agonies of Death shews a kind Concern for them All, and makes them as happy as they could be without him; and then with an Abhorrence of the World, and a seeming Distrust of his Conduct, expires in a Prayer to the Gods.

And now, *Sir*, you have ſeen *CATO* under all theſe *Views*, excellently diverſified; that the Poet might ſhew every Part of his Character in the faireſt and trueſt Light; I cannot queſtion but that as you will be much affected with the Sentiments of the Hero, ſo you will be exceedingly pleaſed with the Judgment of the Poet.

The next Thing that I promis'd you was the Diſtinction of the remaining Characters from each other, this being a particular Happineſs in the preſent Performance, and having been ſo little obſerv'd by others, inſomuch that in many of our Famous Plays, they are ſo confounded, that if we were to ſhut our Eyes, it were hardly poſſible to tell by the Manner the Poets make their Perſons ſpeak, whom the Character ſuited; and the Speech might very often do as well for one or two other Perſons as him who ſpeaks it.

To begin with the Two Sons of *CATO*, PORTIUS and MARCUS, whoſe Complexion, Manners and Tempers, are nicely diſtinguiſh'd; and this Difference of Souls runs viſibly through the whole Play into a friendly Diſparity of Sentiments, the one ſedate and calm, the other warm and paſſionate: They both act upon the ſame Principles of Honour and Virtue, and the Example of their Father: The Elder conſiders him as a Lover of Liberty, and his Country; the Younger meerly in Oppoſition to CÆSAR: The One copies his Morality and Philoſophy, the Other ſhews his Zeal for *Rome*. They are both in Love with the ſame Lady; the Man of ſanguine Temper is free and open, diſcovers his Love with Fire and Vehemence; the Other Rivals him in all but his Rage; and knowing himſelf Maſter of the Prize, endeavours to divert him by Shows of other Objects, and always compaſſionates him.

The

The next part that comes under View is the Character of JUBA, which is entirely new. We muſt ſuppoſe this young Prince had obſerved many Inſtances of *CATO*'s Virtue in his Father's Court, and fired with Admiration of Human Nature, carried to a Pitch which he never ſaw before, to have endeavoured to form himſelf to ſomething like it, from the great Original which was before his Eyes. Nor muſt you think this ſtrange in a Barbarous *Numidian*, ſince the Seeds of Genius and Nature are the ſame in all Perſons and Places; and want only proper Objects, and good Direction, to cultivate and exalt them into virtuous Principles, and the Arts of civiliz'd Life. Thus the ſame Spirit that exercis'd its Courage againſt Beaſts by an eaſie Turn, is made to exert the ſame againſt Tyranny; and he who from a natural Ingenuity could deſpiſe the Fraud of an *African*, might ſoon grow an Admirer of *Roman* Truth and Fidelity. And there is one particular Aſſiſtance to This which may be well ſuppoſed to produce more Wonders than appear in his Character, and that is his Love to *CATO*'s Daughter. His Confuſion at the Diſcovery of his Love to MARCIA; His Submiſſion to the Authority of *CATO*; His Diſcourſe with SYPHAX on the Preference of the Arts of the Mind to thoſe of the Body; and in ſhort, every Incident of his Character is admirable.

Nor is there a leſs Difference in the Vicious than the Virtuous Parts introduc'd: SEMPRONIUS and SYPHAX are both Villains, Traytors and Hypocrites: SEMPRONIUS under the Diſguiſe of a pretended Zeal for his Country, covers his Deſign of going over to CÆSAR, and enjoying MARCIA. SYPHAX, by a diſſembled Affection to his Prince, endeavours firſt to corrupt him, afterwards to leave him: The Villany of the one is raſh and impetuous, hid in a Torrent of Words; that of the other cloſe and cautious; in ſhort, the *Roman*

and

and the *African* differ as much in their Treachery as their Complexion.

Again, LUCIUS, the Oppoſite to SEMPRONIUS, tho' a Friend to *CATO*, yet is ſo much affected by the Deſperateneſs of his Circumſtances, that he always adviſes Peace and Reconciliation; a calm, merciful Diſpoſition, full of Tenderneſs for Sufferers of all Sorts, is his Part: It is not ſo much of Weakneſs, as from the Review of the Calamities that afflicted his Country, that he inclines to the gentler Method, in which he is ſtill over-ruled by his Friendſhip to *CATO*; and ſo continues with him to the laſt.

The two Women inherit the different Spirits of their *Fathers*. The Daughter of *CATO* concerned deeply for her Father, and the Cauſe of Virtue, checks an untimely Paſſion, with the Reflection of the Relation ſhe bears to the dear Head of that Cauſe, and by a great Artifice of the Poet, upon the Suppoſition of the Death of her Lover, diſcovers her Value for him: This Incident is natural as well as neceſſary, ſo that it takes away all Indecency unfit for the Daughter of *CATO* to fall into. On the other ſide, LUCIA, of a ſoft and compaſſionate Temper, cannot diſguiſe her Thoughts, but after ſhe has revealed them, fearful of the Conſequences, reſolves to wait the Event of things before ſhe makes her Lover happy: Here is the Timidity and the Pity of her Father; and at the ſame time her Kindneſs to MARCIA engages Her as far as his Friendſhip to *CATO* did Him.

Now, Sir, I have run through the Parts of the whole *Drama*, and I deſire you to obſerve how juſtly the Plot is work'd up from theſe Characters; and how, in the *Cataſtrophe*, which is of a mixed Nature, unfortunate Goodneſs is left upon Conjecture and to the *Gods*, and the other virtuous Characters all rewarded.

I ſhould now proceed to the Obſervations I promis'd you upon the Third Head, but PHARSALIA being ſo often mentioned through the Play, to raiſe a juſt *Idea* of that Victory, I can't omit tranſlating * LUCAN's Deſcription of the Field of Battle after CÆSAR was Conqueror,

Then dire PHARSALIA's Plain all breathing Blood,
Call'd forth the Wolves, and Tygers, from the Wood,
And gorg'd the Lyons with her horrid Food.
Each left his common Prey his Fellow Beaſt,
To riot on a more Luxurious Feaſt;
The Bears forſook their Caves for this Repaſt,
And Dogs obſcene ran Howling o'er the Waſt;
All Animals that ſcent the Tainted Air,
Of Smell ſagacious, came exulting there.
The Birds that wont at Battles to appear,
Move with the Camp, and hover in the Rear,

* *Book the VII.*

Came

Came numberleſs, the Kinds that us'd of old
To change for milder *Nile* the *Thracian* Cold;
Forgot the Seaſon in the Prey's Delight,
And wing'd their *Weſtern* Way with later Flight.

Never ſuch Flocks of Vulturs heretofore
Obſcur'd the Sky, and feather'd all Heav'n o'er,
Nor ſuch uncommon Weight the loaded ÆTHER bore.

Each deſolated Wood ſent forth her Kind,
The Wood now lab'ring *only* with the Wind;
All Places round the mighty Numbers fill'd,
And *Roman* Blood from ev'ry Tree diſtill'd.
Oft on the impious Standards which they bore,
Trickl'd in frequent Drops the Putrid Gore;
Oft as the Vultur wearied out with Toil,
Her Talon's weaken'd and o'er-charg'd with Spoil,
Shook her wet Pinions in the Airy Space,
The ſcatter'd Blood his *Triumph* to Diſgrace,
Fell from on high, and ſtain'd the *Victor*'s Face.

Nor

Nor yet could all the Number of the Slain,
This Sepulcher, this living Grave obtain,
And by the Beasts converted into Food,
Or harden into Bone, or flow in Blood;
The Beasts themselves their inner Bowels spare,
Nor think the vital Marrow worth their Care;
Nicely the Limbs they Taste, reject and chuse,
And more than half the *Roman* Host refuse.

Whatever Courses in the Field they find,
Touch'd by the Sun, or tainted by the Wind
They careless pass, and leave disdainfully behind.

Now, *Sir*, it is time that I make good my Intentions of pointing out some of the most remarkable Beauties in this PLAY, but indeed they are so numerous, that I must refer most of 'em to your own Judgment; however I hope you will be satisfied with a few.

The Passions which the Character of *CATO* is most apt to raise, are Indignation, Admiration, and I can't tell if I mayn't add Pity; Indignation to see so much Virtue under such a Cloud of Affliction, the greatest Patriot of his Country born down by successful Tyranny, and reduc'd to the Extremity either of a Submission to an ill-got Power, or freeing himself from it by his own Hands. Admiration in observing him even in the midst of all these Calamities, Great,

Good, and Intrepid. Pity for his ill Succeſs in the Public Cauſe, and his Domeſtic Misfortunes, which are apt ſo much the more to move others, as they affected him leſs. If I ſay in all theſe the Poet has done him juſtice, it is the leaſt that can be ſaid, a dangerous and difficult Task it is to manage ſo great a Subject, ſo as to make the Audience intereſted in ev'ry Speech and Action. For as * HORACE ſays,

That Poet ventures on a bold Deſign,
Walks on a Ridge, and dances on a Line;
Who at his Will with all my Paſſions plays,
By Turns excites 'em, and by Turns allays,
Who makes my Soul with borrow'd Anguiſh groan,
Fills me with Foreign Fears, and Sorrows not my own.

QUINTILIAN obſerves that he had often ſeen *Actors* after they had been perſonating ſome more deep and ſolemn Character than ordinary, go off of the Stage with Tears, and thinks no Shame to confeſs that he himſelf has not only melted into Tears, but trembled, look'd pale, been fluſh'd with Anger, at Repreſentations adapted to produce thoſe different Effects. What the *Actors* may do I can't tell, but I am ſure I ſhould have a mean Opinion of the Humanity of the Audience, if they were not mov'd by Inſtances of the like Nature in this PLAY. I pretend not to direct you where to be mov'd, but

* Epiſt. 1. lib. 2.

leave

leave that to Nature, let me only ſuggeſt ſome things to you, which perhaps you might not have obſerv'd: Moſt of *CATO*'s Speeches are fill'd with Indignation againſt CÆSAR, now QUINTILIAN remarks that Interrogations agree beſt with Indignation, and heighten the Sentiments. Of this you may ſee ſeveral beautiful Inſtances in the *Second* ACT, between DECIUS and *CATO*, I ſhall mention but one of 'em: DECIUS is there telling him how CÆSAR was Anxious for his Life, *CATO* replies,

Would he ſave CATO? *Bid him ſpare his Country.*

But the fineſt and moſt beautiful Inſtance of this Nature is where JUBA ſays in the *Fourth* ACT,

While CATO *lives,* CÆSAR *will bluſh to ſee*
Mankind enſlav'd, and be aſham'd of Empire.

And he returns,

CÆSAR *aſham'd! has he not ſeen* PHARSALIA?

An Anſwer the fulleſt of Indignation that I ever read, the very mention of PHARSALIA is enough, without any other Exaggeration; for as the ſame Orator obſerves, there are ſome things (as Murder) which raiſe our Indignation by the very naming of them. But farther, this is not an Inſtance of a Single but a Complicated Beauty, for according to the above-cited Author, ſometimes the ſame Words, meerly by altering the Pronunciation, not only *Indicate*, *Affirm*, *Interrogate*,

Reproach, *Deny*, *Admire*, but are Marks of *Contempt*, *Diſdain*, and *Diminution*. Conſider theſe Words carefully, try them, you'll find the Truth of the *Obſervation*.

Give me leave only to mention one thing more, (tho I could never have done with this Subject) and I will then releaſe you. It is upon a common Topic which all our Poets have occaſion for ſome time or another, an *Impoſſibility*. What a Work do they make here? Sometimes *you might as well move* OLYMPUS; at others, *Stars muſt be graſp'd at*, and the more moderate are contented with making *Rivers flow backward to the Fountain Head*. But here obſerve the Judgment of the Poet in the Firſt ACT, where SEMPRONIUS is telling PORTIUS what a Happineſs he ſhould enjoy, if *CATO* his *Father* would give him his Siſter MARCIA; to which he replies,

Alaſs! SEMPRONIUS, *wouldſt thou talk of Love*
To MARCIA, *while her* FATHER'*s Life's in Danger?*
Thou might'ſt as well court the pale trembling Veſtal
When ſhe beholds the Holy Flame expiring.

You perceive that this is new, beautiful, and ſuited to the Circumſtances with Judgment; and that nothing could be more agreeable to the Notions of a *Roman*, than ſuch an Impoſſibility. Beſides that the Glance at *Religion* improves and exalts the Idea to the higheſt Pitch.

You will wonder, perhaps, that this Subject of *CATO*'s Death, ſo fit for a *Tragedy*, and ſo frequently applauded in the *Latin Poets* and *Hiſtorians*, has never been touched upon

on before. I find in a *Dialogue* attributed by some to TACITUS, by others to QUINTILIAN, that one CURIATIUS MATERNUS had compos'd a *Tragedy* upon this Subject; and it is probable, by the Hint which HORACE gives in his First Ode of the Second *Book* to POLLIO, that *CATO* had a considerable Part in his *Tragedy*, which he advis'd him to defer Publishing, till Matters were better compos'd, and forbear a Subject which could not but be ungrateful to many at that Time.

I think my self oblig'd to take Notice of one Thing more to you, least you should be lead into any Error to the Prejudice of this Admirable Performance, and that is, that you would not think it a *State* or *Party Play*. Nothing can be more ridiculous than to imagine that either the Design of the Author, or any Hints from the Subject, tend that way. *CATO*'s is drawn as he truly was; and as no body sate for the Picture but Him, so it is really like no body beside Him. He stands up for the Constitution of his Country, and the Course of its Laws; for Justice and Liberty, the old *Roman* Principles; and had He been represented otherwise, his Character had been ill drawn, and unlike the Idea all Men of Sense had fram'd of him. What does the Constitution of *Rome* relate to us? or how does his Opposition to CÆSAR affect our Government? But the false Notions of the *Zealous* will often make Vindications of the plainest things necessary, when indeed an Apology for their own Ignorance were more just and proper.

I shall conclude this long Letter, Sir, with a Copy of Verses to the Author of the *Tragedy*, which I hope you will not the less approve of, because you did not request them, as you did these *Observations*, from,

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Your Humble Servant, &c.

Upon Mr. ADDISON'S CATO.

LONG had the *Tragic Muſe* forgot to Weep,
By modern *Operas* quite lull'd a-ſleep:
No Matter what the Lines, the Voice was (clear,
Thus Senſe was ſacrific'd to pleaſe the Ear.
At laſt, † *One Wit* ſtood up in our Defence,
And dar'd (O Impudence!) to publiſh—— Senſe.
Soon then as next the juſt *Tragœdian* ſpoke,
The *Ladies* ſigh'd again, the *Beaux* awoke.
Thoſe Heads that us'd moſt indolent to move
To *Sing-ſong*, *Ballad*, and *Sonata* Love,
Began their buried Senſes to explore,
And found they now had Paſſions as before:
The Power of *Nature* in their Boſoms felt,
In ſpite of Prejudice compell'd to melt.

---

† *The Spectator.*

When

Upon Mr. ADDISON's CATO.

When *CATO*'s firm, all Hope of Succour paſt,
Holding his ſtubborn Virtue to the laſt,
I view, with Joy and conſcious Tranſport fir'd,
The *Soul* of *Rome* in One Great Man retir'd:
In Him, as if She by Confinement gain'd
Her Pow'rs and Energy are higher ſtrain'd
Than when in Crowds of *Senators* ſhe reign'd!
CATO well ſcorn'd the Life that CÆSAR gave,
When *Fear* and *Weakneſs* only bid him ſave:
But when a Virtue like his own revives
The *Hero*'s Conſtancy——— with Joy he lives.

Obſerve the Juſtneſs of the Poet's Thoughts
Whoſe ſmalleſt Excellence is want of Faults:
Without affected Pomp and Noiſe he warms;
Without the gaudy Dreſs of Beauty charms.
Love, the old Subject of the Buskin'd Muſe,
Returns, but ſuch as *Roman Virgins* uſe.
A *Virtuous Love*, chaſtis'd by pureſt Thought,
Not from the Fancy, but from Nature wrought.

Britons,

Upon Mr. ADDISON's CATO.

Britons, with leſſen'd Wonder, now behold
Your former Wits, and all your Bards of old;
JOHNSON out-vy'd in his own Way confeſs;
And own that SHAKESPEAR's ſelf now pleaſes leſs.
While PHÆBUS binds the Laurel on his Brow,
Riſe up, ye *Muſes*, and ye *Poets* bow;
Superiour Worth with Admiration greet,
And place him neareſt to his PHÆBUS Seat.

FINIS.